Encuentros, Summer 2007

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In a stark reversal, racial inequality is re-emerging in contemporary Cuba. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought economic reform to the island that, while allowing Cuba’s socialist experiment to continue, has eroded many of its substantial gains. In 2000-2001, I used a large (334) household survey, in-depth interviews, and participant observation to document the rise of socio-economic inequality in Havana (Blue 2004b). One of the prominent findings from that study was that blacks and mulattos have been specifically disadvantaged in their lack of access to remittances and tourist or joint-venture jobs. In this brief summary, I first provide a background of how economic changes historically have affected racial equality in Cuba. I then turn to the results of the 2000 Havana survey to document the unequal access to economic prosperity in Cuba’s new economy. The conclusion stresses how racial equality has been compromised as part of Cuba’s integration into the globalized world economy.

Cuba’s national identity is that of a mulatto or mestizo nation – composed primarily of a mixture of former Spanish colonizers and African slaves. Cuba was historically known as the “white” island in the Caribbean, based both on actual numbers and the island elite’s desire for a progressively whiter Cuba. The last published census data on race in Cuba (in 1981) reported 34 percent of Cuba’s population black or mulatto and 66 percent white (de la Fuente 2001). However, the growth of the black and mulatto population in the last half-century, due to white emigration and racial mixing, is widely acknowledged (Casal 1989, Segal 1995). Other estimations of Cuba’s racial mixture claim a much higher percentage for the black and mulatto population. The U.S. CIA Fact Book reports 62 percent black or mulatto, 37 percent white, and 1 percent Chinese. The identification of cubanidad (“Cubanness”) with Spain and Africa, regardless of actual numbers, has a history spanning back to the creation of an independent Cuban nation at the turn of the 20th century.

Before independence in 1902 and throughout its republican period (1902-1958), Cuban blacks and mulattos lagged far behind in indicators of equality such as income, education, health care, labor market status, and housing (Casal 1989, de la Fuente 2001). Labor migration from Spain and other Caribbean countries made competition for good-paying jobs intense in the cities, and lowered wages on sugar plantations. U.S. and other foreign-owned companies gave preference to white and foreign workers. Even though Afro-Cubans took great advantage of public schools, prestigious secondary schools – often foreign-run – were racially segregated and closed to
blacks. Political connections and membership in segregated social clubs were critical to gaining professional or political appointment, and most of these avenues were closed to black and mulatto Cubans. Afro-Cubans were thus significantly under-represented in professional jobs and over-represented in the lowest-paying sector throughout the republican period.

The 1959 Cuban Revolution provided many new opportunities for the advancement of blacks and mulattos. Fidel Castro formally addressed and renounced racial discrimination in the early months of the Revolution (Casal 1989). The truly impressive gains in racial equality during the first three decades of the revolution were achieved through the elimination of capitalist economic mechanisms and their replacement by socialist mechanisms. In its profound rejection of capitalist socio-economic privilege (foreign and domestic) and an early commitment to eliminating racial discrimination, the socialist revolution provided a unique opportunity for Afro-Cubans to improve their socio-economic status in relation to white Cubans. An overall trend towards heightened equality resulted in major gains in education, professional status, and income equality by blacks and mulattos during the first three decades of the Cuban revolution (de la Fuente 2001).

Increasing socioeconomic inequality in Cuba today is driven by access to dollars and the new economy. The demise of the Soviet Union in 1989-90 marked three years of economic decline and reliance on survival strategies in Cuba. Acknowledging a need for change, Cuban policy makers made dramatic changes to the Cuban economy from 1993-95, including the legalization of the use of the U.S. dollar, encouragement of remittances through the proliferation of (government-run) dollar-only stores, small-scale self-employment, and an emphasis on tourism and foreign joint ventures. Cuba’s gradual approach to re-incorporation into the capitalist world system has allowed it to maintain most of the social programs that have become hallmarks of the Cuban revolution, such as free and universal health care and education (Jatar-Hausmann 1999). While these limited market-oriented reforms successfully halted the economy’s downward spiral, they have reintroduced – and at the same time eroded the government’s ability to directly control – social and economic inequality (de la Fuente 1998, Monreal 2002).

The structural means through which racial discrimination was virtually eliminated through equal access to education and employment has lost its equalizing force in contemporary Cuba. No longer can black and mulatto Cubans depend on increasing their education and professional status as a guarantee to attaining a higher income and socio-economic status. In the new economy, gains in education and professional experience have not translated into higher socio-economic status. White Cubans, who never completely lost their racial privilege in over 40 years of revolution, are once again able to use their status in Cuba’s racial hierarchy to obtain scarce positions in the new and profitable dollar sector of the economy. Ongoing racial prejudices, which were perhaps mild barriers to the rise of qualified Afro-Cubans in realizing higher socio-economic status in earlier decades, now have real material consequences in the form of subtle racial discrimination in hiring.

The survey of 334 households in Havana in December 2000 allowed an exploration of the dimensions of rising racial inequality in the restructured Cuban economy. The survey indicated that blacks (and mulattos, but especially blacks) are losing ground on several fronts—through the formal sector (government employment), the lucrative new joint-venture sector, and the informal sector. Even though more blacks than whites continued to have faith in higher education as a means of acquiring a higher standard of living, their university degree did not guarantee access to the market-oriented economy. White Cubans in the 2000 Havana survey consistently had more access to the dollar sector of the economy, especially through state employment bonuses and self-employment. Access to jobs that pay in dollars (now convertible pesos, equivalent to the U.S. dollar in value), through official/permitted contact with foreign tourists or business persons, for the most part has been limited to whites in Cuba. White households also have a historic advantage in their ability to use their inherited wealth (e.g., cars, homes) to generate income in the informal sector.

The increase in remittances since the legalization of the dollar in 1993 is an additional source of increasing material inequality in contemporary Cuba, especially along racial lines. The encouragement of remittances was a key element in the 1993-95 restructuring of the Cuban economy (Blue 2004a, Monreal 1999b). In spite of its positive macro-economic effects, the racially disproportionate nature of Cuban out-migration has resulted in a direct connection between the Cuban state’s dependence on remittances from abroad and rising racial inequality. While the white population in Cuba is commonly estimated to be around 35 percent (with 65 percent black and mulatto), 84 percent of the more than one million Cubans in the United States considered themselves ‘white’ in the 2000 U.S. census (Inter-University Program for Latino Research 2004). This racial disparity impacts which groups receive remittances and, in turn, which groups have direct access to the dollar economy.

The historically disproportionate number of white Cuban emigrants has narrowed the potential for black Cuban households to receive remittances and gives whites more access to the new capitalist consumer culture. Due to a smaller likelihood of having emigrant relatives, most black and mulatto families are cut off from

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remittances. In the 2000 Havana survey, more than half of both white (63%) and mixed (54%) households had emigrant relatives, but only slightly more than one-third of black families did (37%). Almost twice as many of the white households received money from relatives abroad than did black households (44% versus 23%). Differences in which households received remittances translated into noticeable differences in income by race. The material advantages accrued by families that receive money from abroad were especially apparent in the analysis of differential consumption by race. Although income levels were more or less even across racial groups before remittances, white households outspent black households in dollar stores and in the purchase of major household appliances.

The government’s reliance on remittances to restore the economy’s balance of payments has ultimately compromised its commitment to socio-economic equality at the household level. The continued colorblind structural approach to redistributing wealth in Cuban society ignores important biases at both the international (e.g., racial discrimination in hiring in the tourist industry) and the household level (e.g., whites receiving more remittance income than blacks or mulattos). Fewer emigrant relatives translates into fewer remittances and uneven access to the dollar economy, which in turn reinforces previous patterns of racial inequality that 30 years of socialist revolution were unable to fully erase. Reliance on colorblind socialist structural mechanisms to maintain social equality has failed to address the rising racial inequality associated with Cuba’s reintegration into the capitalist world economy.

The reintegration of the Cuban economy into the capitalist world system has serious implications for racial equality in Cuba. The restructuring of the economy has created new social divisions that, due to enduring racial prejudices in Cuban society, are reconstituting racial hierarchies that three decades of socialism were unable to eliminate. The circulation of foreign capital in the domestic economy, which has brought new opportunities for significant individual material gain, has eroded the major gains in racial equality that were based on structural changes in the socialist economy. The government, in its ongoing commitment to social justice, has maintained its social safety net (i.e., free and universal health care, education, and social security) and protected vulnerable groups through colorblind programs that identify and provide aid for the highest risk groups, such as pregnant women, the very young, and the elderly (Uriarte 2002). Identification of a growing “race problem,” however, has not yet made its way into public discourse. The continued reliance on structural means to ‘solve’ the race problem has denied Afro-Cubans a means of legal recourse to the new (and enduring) forms of racial discrimination that have entered Cuban society along with market-oriented reforms.

Works Cited


Sarah Blue is an assistant professor of geography. This article is adapted from her forthcoming article in Latin American Politics and Society 49, no. 3 (Fall 2007). The research presented in this article was supported by NSF Grant #0117931.
New Faculty Associates

The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies has recently added four new faculty associates: Sarah Blue, assistant professor of geography, Kristin Huffine, assistant professor of history, Joshua Rodríguez, assistant professor of foreign languages and literatures, and Linda Saborío, assistant professor of foreign languages and literatures. Recently, John Alexander sat down with each to learn a little more about them and their research interests and teaching specialties.

Sarah Blue
Assistant Professor, Department of Geography
Professor Blue, who is the author of our lead article (see p. 1), teaches her department’s courses in World Regional Geography, Geography of Latin America, Urbanization in the Developing World, Political Geography, and Population Geography.

J.A.: Your newsletter article focuses on financial remittances from Cuban immigrants and their impact on the Cuban economy, but how would you describe your broader research agenda?

S.B.: My research focuses on how international migration and changes in the global political economy affect local socio-economic dynamics in Latin America and the United States. I use case studies of contemporary issues to illustrate how larger global processes such as changing international geopolitics, economic trade relations, and transnational labor flows impact specific social groups such as racial minorities and women. Previously I have examined the constraints and opportunities faced by returned Guatemalan refugee women as they sought to continue the empowering political activity they had begun in Mexican refugee camps. My current research focuses on systems of labor recruitment and subcontracting among Latino immigrants in the United States.

J.A.: What led to your interest in this research area?

S.B.: I studied in an intensive Spanish language program in Guatemala after graduating from college, where I got interested in issues of social justice and women and development. I then conducted my master’s research in Guatemala, which focused on a women’s organization that formed in the refugee camps in Mexico. I became interested in Cuba after spending two months in yet another intensive Spanish language program prior to beginning my Ph.D. program at UCLA. The focus of my dissertation research was racial inequality and remittances in Cuba’s post-Soviet economy.

Kristin Huffine
Assistant Professor, Department of History
Professor Huffine teaches her department’s introductory courses on Latin America, a course entitled Indigenous Mexico, Indigenous Peru, and The African Diaspora in Colonial Latin America, and various graduate courses on colonial Latin America.

J.A.: What is it about colonial Latin America that interests you?

K.H.: I have several different interests as it relates to colonial Latin America. In a general sense I am interested in colonial encounters in Latin America from 1492 through the independence period. As a part of those encounters my research involves looking at race as a category of analysis in colonial Latin American history as well as how the scientific study of race in Latin America emerged out of the natural history and ethnographic analysis of 17th-and 18th-century Latin American thinkers. Additionally, my research focuses on the history of the Church and Catholic expansion in Latin America, and cultural and intellectual history.

J.A.: What would you say were some of your most formative experiences that led you to develop these research interests?

K.H.: I came to the study of colonial Latin America because of an interest in the indigenous populations in Latin America and long-term political interests in the region. In high school and college, during the 1980s, I was actively involved in political efforts to stop U.S. intervention in Central America. It was because of these political interests that I turned to a study of history. I’ve also had long-term interests in the Catholic Church in Latin America. Both liberation theology and political activism on the part of individual church members like Gustavo Gutiérrez and Ernesto Cardenal also were very intriguing to me.

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In college I pursued bachelor’s degrees in religious studies and literature, and at that time I became interested in other trends in theology, intellectual history, the history of science, and contemporary studies in post-structuralist theory. My study of the indigenous populations in colonial Río de la Plata that I started during my doctoral studies at UC-Berkeley is an attempt to bring these interests together, and to look specifically at how the colonial production of knowledge dealing with American identity had specific repercussions on indigenous self-reflexive thought.

**J.A.: What are you currently working on?**

K.H.: I have two new projects: One is a study of Amerindians in Europe between 1492 and the early 19th century, and the other is an intellectual historical study of hysteria and gender identity in colonial and modern Latin America. In this study, I intend to examine the medical formulation and gendered physiology of hysteria in the theoretical treatises from Spain and the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru during the period. I want to look at how colonial medical and legal definitions of hysteria were transformed into modern psychiatric conditions established by doctors and sanatoria at the turn of the 20th century.

J.A.: What led you to develop an interest in making the study of the Spanish language into a career?

J.R.: Though my father was from Guatemala, I did not learn Spanish growing up. However, as I got older I felt a great desire to learn Spanish and to try to identify myself more with the Hispanic community. At age 19, I learned Spanish when I served a two-year mission in Honduras and Belize for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. When I came back to the U.S. in 1992, I decided to major in Spanish in college.

**J.A.: Describe your research interests.**

J.R.: As a student and instructor of Spanish, I feel a great passion for grammar. One area that particularly intrigues me is the contrast between the pretérito and imperfecto past tenses. I eventually used this topic as the basis for my doctoral dissertation at Ohio State, which is a formal semantic treatment of tense, imperfectivity, and modality. This has led me to further work in tense and aspect problems, such as the use of the progressive with stative verbs (e.g., estoy queriendo, está teniendo, etc.), a formal account of sequence of tense, and a recent paper discussing the ambiguity of a class of cognitive stative verbs (e.g., saber, comprender, etc.) between an inchoative or initiating interpretation (find out, begin to understand, etc.) and a simple stative interpretation.

**J.A.: What are some of the issues in Spanish grammar you are thinking to work on next?**

J.R.: In the short term, I will continue to work on issues involving inchoativity and modality, and other tense and aspect phenomena that must be accounted for at the interfaces between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Within the next few years I would also like to work on some historical grammar issues involving the present and future subjunctive.

**J.A.: Why does the subjunctive tense continue to play a strong part in Spanish when its importance seems to have faded in other languages like English?**

J.R.: One of the beauties of Spanish grammar is that it has a rich system of verb endings, so that more information and nuance can be communicated with a single word. The subjunctive, like the pretérito/imperfecto contrast, adds an overall characterization of perspective and attitude to a sentence that is not possible to express so succinctly in English. English, on the other hand, has historically moved toward less and less reliance on word forms at the expense of relying more on verb constructions and fixed word orders. We can often communicate approximately the same nuances in either language, but through different grammatical means.

**Linda Saborío**

Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Professor Saborío teaches her department’s introductory course on Hispanic literature, an advanced composition course, and a survey course on Masterpieces of Spanish American Literature.

**J.A.: How is it that you came to specialize in Latino and Mexican theater?**

L.S.: At UNC-Chapel Hill I studied under the direction of Professor Stuart Dey, a mentor who influenced my interest in Mexican and Latino theatre and helped me to develop an even greater appreciation of it. Additionally, it was my experiences living in southern California and my travels abroad that led me to this particular area of specialization. I enjoy attending theater productions and was influenced greatly by the theatre I was exposed to while traveling through Central America. My undergraduate work at UC-Irvine, where I studied under Professor Juan Villegas, also motivated me to continue my studies in theatre. At UC-Irvine I was introduced to Latino playwrights Luis Valdez, Milcha Sánchez-Scott, and Luis Alfaro, among others.

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J.A.: What are you currently working on?

L.S.: Currently I am working with two of Luis Valdez’s plays, *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* and *The Mummified Deer*. I would also like to begin research on Elena Garro’s short plays found in her collection entitled *Un hogar sólido*. Valdez is the founder of Teatro Campesino, a small group of amateur actors who incorporated the local farm workers into their productions in order to address issues of exploitation. Valdez’s plays are of interest to my research since they address contemporary Chicano and Latino issues of identity formation for primarily Mexican American immigrants.

Elena Garro is a Mexican playwright whose plays dramatize feminist characters within a surreal setting. My research with Garro is not tied to Valdez in any particular way. However, I do theater from both Mexico and Latinos in the U.S., and Elena Garro’s theater has always been of special interest to me due to its surreal and feminist aspects.

J.A.: What is it that particularly attracts you to Sánchez-Scott’s work?

L.S.: Milcha Sánchez-Scott portrays in her plays the exploitation of immigrants and their struggle to survive both economically and culturally in the United States. She has written several dramas including *Latina* and *Roosters* as well as two shorter pieces entitled *Dog Lady* and *The Cuban Swimmer*. I decided to include Sánchez-Scott’s piece *Latina* in my research because I enjoy her direct style and humorous dialogue. She is also one of the first among other dramatists to initiate a questioning of stereotypes about Latinos in the United States. Unfortunately, I have been told that she is no longer writing theater.

2006 Faculty Publications and Activities

**Gregory Beyer**  
Assistant Professor, Music

*Publications*

*Vou-me embora: A concerto for Berimbau.* Arcomusical.

*Papers Presented*


*Performances*

Performed with Due East at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Austin, TX, November 8-11, 2006.

Solo Recital at Columbus State University, Columbus, GA, October 28, 2006.

Solo Performance of Jeff Herriot’s “Hollow,” at the Electronic Music Midwest Festival, Lewis University, Romeoville, IL, October 12-14, 2006.

Solo Performance of “Vou-me embora” with NIU Wind Symphony, DeKalb, IL, October 15, 2006.

Solo Recital in Warsaw, Poland, July 2, 2006.

Performed with Due East at Crossdrumming! Festival in Warsaw, Poland, July 1-5, 2006.


Solo Recital at Beijing Modern Festival, Beijing, China, May 28, 2006.

Performed with Due East at Western Illinois University New Music Festival 2006, Macomb, IL, March 6-8, 2006.

Solo Recital at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, February 9, 2006.

Performed with the South Asia Orchestra a concert of Ludwig van Beethoven’s “9th Symphony” at Carnegie Hall, New York, NY, January 23, 2006.

*Lectures*

“O Berimbau,” presented at Columbus State University, Columbus, GA, October 29, 2006.

“O Berimbau,” presented at Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, October 27, 2006.

“O Berimbau,” presented at Emory University, Atlanta, GA, October 26, 2006.


**Sarah A. Blue**  
Assistant Professor, Geography

*Papers Presented*


Professional Accomplishments
Submitted an NSF grant proposal titled “La Nueva Orleans: A Lens into Emerging Trends in Latino Migration,” to support an extensive study focusing on issues of labor subcontracting, undocumented immigration, and gendered experiences of Hispanic migrants working to rebuild New Orleans.

Awarded an Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP) grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Northern Illinois University, to direct an undergraduate research assistant in the survey of labor subcontracting throughout northern Illinois.

Karen Carrier
Associate Professor, Literacy Education

Publications
“Creating Sentence Walls to Help English-Language Learners Develop Content Literacy.” *Reading Teacher*, 60 no. 3: 285-288. (With Alfred W. Tatum)


Papers Presented


“Helping Teacher Education Faculty Infuse Theory and Best Practices For Educating ELLs Into Their Courses,” presented at the National Association for Bilingual Education Conference, Phoenix, AZ, January 18-21, 2006. (With Suzanne Wagner)

Professional Accomplishments
Conducted a series of best practices workshops at three regional education offices for rural teachers working with English language learners.

Louise Ciallella
Associate Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures

Publications


Winifred Creamer
Professor, Anthropology

Publications

Papers Presented
“Preliminary Results from Excavations at Caballete, a Late Preceramic Site in the Fortaleza Valley,” presented at the 25th Northeast Conference on Andean Archaeology and Ethnohistory, Philadelphia, PA, October 21-22, 2006. (With Alvaro Ruiz, Nathan Craig, Jonathan Haas, Gerbert Asencios, Jesus Holguín, and Rebecca Osborn)


Mayra C. Daniel
Assistant Professor, Literacy Education

Publications
“Assessing English Language Learners (ELLs) in Mainstream Classrooms.” *The Reading Teacher*, 60 no. 1: 24-34. (With Susan D. Lenski, Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala, and Xiaoqin Sun-Irminger)


“Book Microscopes: The Effects of Student Completion of Guided Tasks to Promote L2 Writing Expertise as an Outgrowth of L2 Reading.” *2005 College Reading Association Yearbook*. Logan: College Reading Association.


“Recent Multicultural Poetry.” *Book Links*, 15, no. 3: 47-49. (With Chris Carger)


Papers Presented

“Three Teachers Show Their Stuff,” presented at the 29th Annual Statewide Conference for Teachers Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students, Oakbrook, IL, October 26-27, 2006. (With Margaret Blakeslee, Andrea Brenner, and Denise Harts)


Ibis Gómez-Vega
Associate Professor, English

Publications
“Urban Violence and Failed Myths in Raymond Carver’s ‘What We Talk about When We Talk about Love.’” Short Story, 12, no. 2: 71-83.

Michael Gonzales
Presidential Research Professor, History
Director of the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies

Papers Presented

Kristin Huffine
Assistant Professor, History

Papers Presented


Guadalupe T. Luna
Professor, School of Law

Papers Presented

Eloy E. Merino  
Associate Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures  
*Publications*  
*Oceanografía de Xenius: Ensayos críticos en torno a Eugenio d’Ors.* Barcelona: Reichenberger. (Edited with Carlos X. Ardavín and Xavier Pla)  
“Eugenio d’Ors, revisitado.” In Eloy E. Merino, Carlos X. Ardavín, and Xavier Pla (eds.), *Oceanografía de Xenius: ensayos críticos en torno a Eugenio d’Ors.* Barcelona: Reichenberger.  
*La obra del literato y sus alrededores: estudios críticos en torno a Camilo José Cela.* Iria Flavia, Spain: Universidad Camilo José Cela y la Fundación Camilo José Cela. (Edited with Carlos X. Ardavín)  
“La representación de José Antonio por el joven periodista Cela: el deber y su *performance*.” In Eloy E. Merino and Carlos X. Ardavín (eds.), *La obra del literato y sus alrededores: estudios críticos en torno a Camilo José Cela.* Iria Flavia, Spain: Universidad Camilo José Cela y la Fundación Camilo José Cela.  
*Papers Presented*  

Eugene Perry  
Professor, Geology and Environmental Geosciences  
*Publications*  
“Post-Chicxulub Depositional and Diagenetic History of the Northwestern Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico.” *Sedimentary Geology,* 183: 51-70. (With Liliana Lefticariu, Mihai Lefticariu, and William C. Ward)  
*Papers Presented*  
“The Oxygen Isotopic Composition of Precambrian Cherts Revisited,” presented at the 16th Annual V.M. Goldschmidt Conference, Melbourne, Australia, August 27-September 1, 2006. (With Liliana Lefticariu)  

Joshua Rodríguez  
Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages  
*Papers Presented*  

Linda Saborío  
Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures  
*Papers Presented*  

Greg Schmidt  
Professor, Political Science  
*Publications*  
“All the President’s Women: Fujimori and Gender Equity in Peruvian Politics.” In Julio Carrión (ed.), *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Latin America.* University Park: The Pennsylvania State Press.  
*Papers Presented*  
*Professional Activities*  
Francisco Solares-Larrave  
Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures

Publications


Papers Presented
“Ingermina o la hija del Calamar, de Juan José Nieto (1844), y el discurso contrahistórico,” presented at the VII Jornadas Andinas de Literatura Latinoamericana, Bogotá, Colombia, August 14-18, 2006.


Professional Accomplishments
Received an NIU Summer Research and Artistry Grant to do research in the Nettie Lee Benson Library at the University of Texas, Austin.

Member of the Editorial Committee of the online journal Hipertexto (www.panam.edu/dept/modlang/hipertexto.htm)

Recently completed four-year term as member of the MLA Executive Committee on Spanish American Literature from the Independence era to 1900.


CLLAS Research and Travel Awards

Grants Awarded to Faculty in FY 2006
Karen Carrier (Literacy Education) – To research how ESL learners perform different listening and cognitive processing tasks that aid the development of conversational listening skills.

Gregory D. Schmidt (Political Science) – To continue on-going research into Peruvian electoral law and its impact on vote manipulation schemes by political parities in the 2000 General Elections.

Grants Awarded to Faculty FY 2007
Mayra Daniel (Literacy Education) – To survey Guatemalan literacy teachers about on-going literacy training, and to investigate the unmet needs of various Guatemalan literacy programs.

Eugene Perry (Geology and Environmental Geosciences) – To investigate physical and chemical properties of groundwater aquifers in Yucatán, Mexico.

Graduate Student Research Grants Awarded in FY 2006
David Ouellette (School of Art) – To support research into the architecture and iconography of ancient Maya-speaking people at the Blue Creek site, Belize, and the Epiclassic and Early Postclassic trade routes in the Yucatán, Mexico.

Mary Katherine Scott (School of Art) – To support research in northern Yucatán, Mexico, to determine the key motivations of contemporary Maya artists who choose the subject matter and style of ancient Maya stelae in their woodcarvings and other artworks.

Graduate Student Research Grants Awarded in FY 2007
Priscila Aláfico-Barrantes (Kinesiology and Physical Education) – To support research that identifies sponsorship for the creation of the Costa Rican Games, a competitive sports program for Costa Rican high school and college athletes.

Bianca Pederson (Geology and Environmental Geosciences) – To support a study of the physical and chemical properties of groundwater aquifers in Yucatán, Mexico.

Angélica López (Anthropology) – To support an ethnographic investigation into the changing identity of a Maya community near Lake Atitlán, Guatemala.

Matthew Maletz (History) – To support research in Guatemala that analyzes land disputes during a period of expansion of the 19th century coffee industry.

Eva Trujillo-Herrera (Economics) – To support research at the United Nation's International Trade Center, Geneva, Switzerland, investigating the implications of microcredit for women's economic empowerment in Latin America.
CLLAS Activities

Robert Marcelin Memorial Scholarship
The Robert Marcelin Memorial Scholarship was endowed by employees of Ameritech Corporation, led by Alison Thomson, to honor Mr. Marcelin, a former co-worker and friend who graduated from Northern Illinois University. The scholarship is awarded annually to an outstanding student of Latino heritage.

Center for Latino and Latin American Studies Scholarship
The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies began offering a scholarship in 2006 for well-qualified Latino students. The scholarship is designed to reward achievement and promise. The first two winners were Diana Narvaez and Erika Sánchez.

Center Sponsored Events

Speakers Sponsored by the Center
On April 19-20, 2006, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies co-sponsored along with the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures a seminar and lecture by Ivan A. Schulman, professor emeritus from the University of Illinois, and professor of Spanish at Florida International University. The seminar focused on Silvestre de Balboa y Troya de Quesada's "El espejo de Paciencia" (1608), Cuba's first great epic poem. Schulman spoke on the influence of Asian painting on Latin American modernist writers, especially in Cuba, in a lecture entitled "Modernist Orientalisms."

On November 14, 2006, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies co-sponsored along with the NIU School of Art a lecture by Esther Pasztory, the Lisa and Bernard Selz Professor in Pre-Columbian Art History, Columbia University. Her lecture, entitled "Sacrifice as Reciprocity: Aztec & Inca," examined the role of human sacrifice in the visual culture and religious context of Post-Classic era civilizations.

On November 16-17, 2006, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies sponsored a lecture and seminar by Alejandro de la Fuente, a professor of history from the University of Pittsburgh and recent book prize winner of the Latin American and Caribbean Section of the Southern Historical Association for *A Nation for All* (2001). De la Fuente's seminar, entitled "Slaves and the Creation of Legal Rights in Cuba," explored the implications of the episodic occurrence of slaves suing their masters in order to secure their freedom from 1550-1610.